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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0294
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1909
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0743
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0146
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2028
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [CN](#) [SL](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: ST. LUCIA: GOVERNMENT TEETERS ON THE BRINK OF
COLLAPSE, BUT PULLS BACK FOR THE MOMENT

REF: A. BRIDGETOWN 319
[1](#)B. 07 BRIDGETOWN 810
[1](#)C. 07 BRIDGETOWN 741
[1](#)D. 07 BRIDGETOWN 589

Classified By: PolOff Tyler Allen for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) St. Lucia's leadership crisis came to a head in late May as two ministers threatened to leave the governing party and serve as independents and others weighed their options. With the government facing the loss of its majority in parliament, Economic Planning Minister Ausbert d'Auvergne resigned May 23, and Prime Minister Stephenson King announced May 27 that he had agreed to reinstate former Foreign Minister Rufus Bousquet and the banished Marcus Nicholas back in the Cabinet. The machinations of Bousquet, Nicholas, and Housing Minister Richard Frederick, who are widely believed to be corrupt, if not outright criminal, have led to a widening fissure within the ruling United Workers Party (UWP) into "pro-Compton" and "renegade MP" camps, with the latter most recently luring deputy party leader Spider Montoute to their side. Bousquet and Frederick appeared willing to take down the government, as they would, according to party insiders, receive a large payout from China for doing so. The compromise reached with d'Auvergne's resignation appears to have calmed the waters for the moment, but with four ministers harboring ambitions of being Prime Minister, the political infighting is likely to continue. END SUMMARY.

JEANNINE COMPTON PAYS A VISIT

[1](#)2. (C) On May 22, embattled Prime Minister Stephenson King contacted the Embassy to speak with the Ambassador, who was traveling in the region. Speaking with the DCM, he indicated that he wanted to send a representative to meet with the DCM and Embassy staff to review two law enforcement issues relating to members of his government whose resolution could have some bearing on the current governing crisis. Sir John Compton's daughter, a UWP member of parliament, Jeannine Compton-Rambally, traveled to Bridgetown later that day to meet with the DCM and mission staff. Cutting to the chase,

Compton asked what information the U.S. might have on Bousquet's convictions in the United States and what Post knew concerning ongoing investigations against Frederick. She noted that the Prime Minister was seeking this background to be better able to determine how to handle their threats to leave the party. The request mirrored earlier requests by the GOSL, and Post provided the same responses it has previously (ref C and D), that we can only share law enforcement information requested through official channels, such as the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, and only if such information is used for law enforcement purposes. Post also advised Compton that convictions are public information that could be accessed through a private investigator or private attorney.

13. (S/NF) Concerning Frederick, Post shared its understanding that additional evidence concerning the customs case against Frederick (ref B) is with CBP Miami and is awaiting clearances within the GOSL for the Comptroller of Customs to travel and receive the incriminating information. Compton explained that Frederick is grabbing for more power in Cabinet so that he could squash the investigation against him. She then explained that the customs investigation is connected to a murder investigation in which Scotland Yard is involved.

TYING KING'S HANDS

14. (C) Following this discussion, the DCM, PolChief and PolOff hosted Compton to dinner and reviewed the various

scenarios unfolding in St. Lucia. Noting that many in the current government stood to lose their positions if the government fell and the opposition returned, as is considered likely, the DCM asked whether that would be enough incentive to bring the rebels back from the brink. Compton explained that threatening to return to the polls had been an ineffective tool for King because, she said, China has promised large sums of money to those -- namely Bousquet, Frederick, and Nicholas -- who were willing to help bring down the government and thereby allow the pro-China St. Lucia Labour Party to return to office. To strengthen their position against King, the renegade MPs then coaxed Social Transformation Minister Lenard 'Spider' Montoute to their side by promising to support him as Prime Minister. Although Montoute was deputy political leader, then-PM Sir John Compton appointed King as Acting Prime Minister during his illness, a move that launched King to the office of Prime Minister. Those supporting Montoute seemed to have played off his disappointment of having been passed over. However, many believe that Montoute is still too inexperienced to be Prime Minister and that he would merely serve as Bousquet's and Frederick's puppet.

KING CAVES TO BOUSQUET

15. (C) The day after the meeting with Compton, Prime Minister King decided to play the only hand he had to keep the party together and ask Economic Affairs Minister D'Auvergne to resign and agree to return Bousquet and Nicholas to Cabinet. The new cabinet positions have not yet been determined, but Bousquet has indicated that he will receive a "more prominent" portfolio. Contrary to statements in the press that she would resign if Bousquet were allowed in Cabinet, Compton told us she had no plans on leaving the party. However, she added that she is unsure how well the weakened King will be able to keep Bousquet, Nicholas, and Frederick in line.

COMMENT: BAND-AIDS ON BIGGER PROBLEMS

16. (C) King appears to have found a compromise for the

moment that allows him to remain in office. However, as Compton and another minister have told us, King continues to paint himself further into a corner with each compromise. Compton observed that he should have taken more decisive action sooner, but waited too long and is now vulnerable. Although this latest resolution keeps the party afloat, the ship of state is likely to spring more leaks as the band aids fall off. Unfortunately, the compromises have resulted in more power shifting to potentially corrupt factions in the party or those who have little stake in the success of the government and would be willing to see it fail if they can gain personally from outside money. Given the many personal agendas in play in the UWP, it seems unlikely that the current administration will be able to serve out its full term in office through 2011.

18. (C) Among the more interesting comments Compton shared with Post came in response to a question about her own potential interest in serving as Prime Minister. She smiled, and, while noting that many people in St. Lucia were calling for her to step forward, insisted that she was not ready to serve as Prime Minister "yet." Although new to politics, Compton acknowledged to having spent many years listening to political discussions between her father and his political allies. Compton's incisive assessments of the political situation and her clear understanding of King's options and their likely consequences suggest she has the political savvy to emerge as a UWP standard-bearer should the UWP limp along for a long enough time for her to build her base of support.

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